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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 000500

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/07/2026

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [ASEC](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: ATTACK BY ANTI-CHRISTIAN ASSAILANTS

Classified By: Consulate Adana Principal Officer W. Scott Reid, reasons
1.4 b and d.

1. (U) This message is from AmConsulate Adana.

2. (C) Summary: AMCON ADANA PO on February 2 discussed a January 8 attack by anti-Christian assailants against Turkish Protestant pastor Kamil Kiroglu. Kiroglu confirmed the accounts of his attack first reported on the COMPASS news website (compassdirect.org or newssums@lists.compassdirect.org). Kiroglu believes that several of his assailants are the same as those who attacked an AmCit in Gaziantep last year. Turkish National Police (TNP) investigating the case believe that they have located the group in nearby Gaziantep and consider them ultra-nationalists despite their self-proclamation of al Qaeda affiliation. End Summary.

Five Attackers Beat Pastor Unconscious

3. (SBU) Kiroglu said that a five-man group, feigning interest in Christianity, cornered him on January 8 outside his storefront church, after introducing themselves as "new Christian converts from Mersin and Gaziantep seeking further bible education" and attending a church service earlier in the day. When they realized that Kiroglu, who said that he belatedly suspected a problem, had locked them outside the church, they attacked him with a small knife and their fists, saying that they were from al Qaeda, demanding that he recant his Christian beliefs, and knocking him unconscious. He sustained face and mouth injuries requiring six stitches and several days to recover.

4. (SBU) TNP are investigating his case and protecting three small Adana Christian churches in the interim. TNP, upon entering the church to investigate, found a large, brand-new butcher's knife hidden under a sofa cushion in the outer sanctuary. Kiroglu believes that, had he not locked the door leading back into the church, it was the group's intention to "ritualistically kill" him. TNP also reviewed a videotape made of the church service coincidentally made by a visitor and noted that the group's members largely avoided having their faces recorded in a very clear manner, leaving them with only one limited glimpse of several members of the group.

5. (SBU) Kiroglu and an AmCit attacked with a similar method in Gaziantep last year, who are several-year acquaintances, have compared descriptions and names of their respective assailants. They have concluded that three of the alleged

assailants are the same, including the leader who originally spoke in Central Asian accented Russian to Kiroglu (who had worked in Kazakhstan for two years and recognized the regional accent) and identified himself as a Turkmenistan national.

Police Suspect Ultra-Nationalists

¶6. (C) Meanwhile, the TNP have informed Kiroglu that they have located his five alleged assailants in Gaziantep and identified them as part of an ultra-nationalist network. They asked whether he wished them arrested and Kiroglu said that he had "forgiven them, but did not want them to be able to attack someone again." The TNP then commented that the group allegedly attacked a "minority group" and therefore the TNP will pursue the investigation and are watching them to determine the further extent of the network.

Public Largely Unaware of Incident

¶7. (U) Local media have not reported the incident and Kiroglu said that he would be hesitant to speak with them if approached because of past reporting on his church that he considers distorted and intended to misportray Christian beliefs.

¶8. (U) When contacted, TNP in Adana have told the international internet press that they do not consider the affiliation of the group to al Qaeda credible. They told the international internet press that they believe the group's tactics suggest an attempt to intimidate the small Christian community and discourage conversion from Islam to Christianity.

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